

Message Text

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51

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGR-20 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10

LAB-06 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SP-03 STR-08 TRSE-00 SWF-02

CIEP-02 OMB-01 SIL-01 AID-20 CU-04 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

L-03 NSC-07 PA-04 PRS-01 SS-20 USIA-15 SCCT-02 PC-10

A-01 OPR-02 SY-04 OC-06 CCO-00 DRC-01 /190 W

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R 121110Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4115

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, EGEN

SUBJ: GROWING SUPPORT FOR TEXTILE STRIKE

REF : BANGKOK 9509

1. MORNING NEWSPAPERS JUNE 12 REPORTED TWO MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE SINCE REFTEL:

A) PRESIDENT WORKERS' ASSOCIATION OF THAILAND REPRESENTING BRANCHES VARIOUSLY ESTIMATED FROM 24 AND 34 AND 400,000 MEMBERS REPORTEDLY EXPRESSED PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR STRIKE;

B) CABINET AT REGULAR TUESDAY MEETING DIRECTED NEW MINISTER OF INTERIOR AND MINISTER OF INDUSTRY TO MEET WITH WORKERS AND SETTLE DISPUTE.

2. STUDENT ACTIVISTS, MAINLY FROM RAMKHAMHAENG UNIVERSITY, CONTINUE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE TEXTILE WORKERS' STRIKE.

HOWEVER, SOME OF THE MAJOR STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS APPEARED INITIALLY RELUCTANT TO INVOLVE THEMSELVES IN THE DEMONSTRATION. ALTHOUGH THE MAJOR STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

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REPORTEDLY SPONSORED THE JUNE 9 THAMMASAT SEMINAR "TEXTILE

WORKERS AND THE BLOODSUCKING JAPANESE CAPITALISTS", OTHERS WERE POSSIBLY USING THESE ORGANIZATIONS' NAMES WITHOUT THE ORGANIZATIONS' APPROVAL. MOREOVER, THE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL YEAR IS JUST BEGINNING AND THE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS ARE INVOLVED IN COMPETING PROGRAMS. AS THE STRIKE ACTION APPROACHES RESOLUTION, HOWEVER, A FEW STUDENT LEADERS SEEM TO BE MORE WILLING TO IDENTIFY THEMSELVES WITH THE WORKERS' DEMANDS. THE THAI LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS OF JUNE 12 CARRY STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT FOR THE TEXTILE WORKERS FROM BOTH INFLUENTIAL AND INSIGNIFICANT STUDENT LEADERS. A COLLECTION OF STUDENT LEADERS PLACED A WREATH AT THE JAPANESE TRADE CENTER IN BANGKOK JUNE 11 PROTESTING JAPANESE ECONOMIC INTERESTS.

3. OFFICIAL AT LABOR DEPARTMENT LATE ON JUNE 12 TOLD EMBASSY OFFICER THAT SUPPORT FOR STRIKERS WAS STILL GROWING. ADDED THAT SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTE NOW RAISED ABOVE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR LEVEL AND WAS IN HANDS OF GOVERNMENT.

4. LATE AFTERNOON BANGKOK WORLD SAID 250 ENGINEERING STUDENTS (THE SHOCK TROOPS OF THE OCTOBER TURNOVER) HAD VOLUNTEERED TO PROVIDE SECURITY FOR STRIKERS. SAME ARTICLE ALSO REPORTED THAT TWO CABINET MEMBERS CHARGED WITH ENDING STRIKE HAD CALLED URGENT MEETING WITH ASSISTANTS, AND THAT MINISTER OF INTERIOR HAD EXPRESSED SYMPATHY, IN VIEW OF HIGHER LIVING COSTS FOR DEMANDS OF WORKERS FOR INCREASE IN MINIMUM WAGE FROM 16 TO 25 BAHT. PRESIDENT OF WORKERS' ASSOCIATION ALSO DEFENDED INCREASED WAGES BUT REPORTEDLY DESCRIBED 25 BAHT DEMAND AS BEING ON HIGH SIDE. END UNCLASSIFIED.

5. EMBASSY OFFICER AGAIN VISITED STRIKE SITE LATE IN AFTERNOON JUNE 12 AND ESTIMATED PARTICIPANTS AT ROUGHLY DOUBLE NUMBER OF PREVIOUS DAY. CONCLUDED THAT SPEAKERS AT THAT TIME WERE NOT STUDENTS.

6. COMMENT: OUTLOOK CONTINUES TO POINT TO COMPROMISE SETTLEMENT INVOLVING AT LEAST SOME INCREASE IN PAY. RAISING SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTE TO MINISTERIAL LEVEL CAN ONLY BE INTERPRETED BY WORKERS AS INDICATION OF GOVERNMENT WILLINGNESS TO MOVE TOWARD STRIKERS' DEMANDS, AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INCLINATION THAT GROWING SUPPORT FOR STRIKERS, ORAL THOUGH IT STILL IS, CAN ONLY HELP TO REENFORCE. KINTNER

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